

# Sleep Strategies for Shift Workers

## Ways of Minimizing Sleepiness

- Maintain a consistent sleep-wake schedule, even on 'days off'
- Develop and try to maintain an "anchor" sleep period
  - ❖ 3-4 hours when you always sleep regardless of schedule
- Add a second sleep period of 3-4 hours to fit your schedule
- Ensure you achieve a 7 hour minimum of sleep every 24-hours
- If your work schedule changes, go to sleep as soon as possible after your shift
- Create an unwinding and relaxing bedtime ritual
  - ❖ Example: taking a warm bath, drinking a warm glass of milk or a cup of decaffeinated tea
- Avoid stressful tasks before bed or while in bed
  - ❖ Example: balancing a checkbook or reading/watching a thrilling movie
- Make your home environment as quiet as possible
- Manage exposure to sunlight and bright indoor light
  - ❖ Dim your lights, invest in light-blocking shades, and/or wear an eye mask to bed
- Ensure bedroom temperature is moderate and comfortable
  - ❖ Not too hot or too cold
- At work:
  - ❖ Take breaks and walk around
  - ❖ Engage in conversations with people around you
  - ❖ Request a break or nap if drowsiness occurs if you:
    - Operate heavy equipment
    - Drive a vehicle
    - Provide health care, or
    - Other safety sensitive work

\*\* If you try these recommendations, but still have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or feel excessively tired, talk with your doctor. Visit the National Sleep Foundation's website, [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org) to learn more about healthy sleep, sleep disorder symptoms and to find a sleep professional in your area.\*\*

